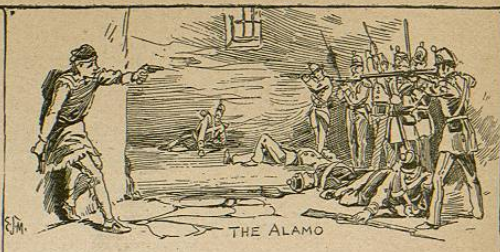


SAMUEL HOUSTON



CHAPTER XXVIII

Samuel Houston

1793-1863

WHEN the treaty of peace was signed with Great Britain in 1783, the number of States in the Union was thirteen.

When Andrew Jackson was President, fifty years later, it was twenty-four. The new States had been admitted one by one: Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, Mississippi, Illinois, Alabama, Maine, and Missouri.

Twelve of these twenty-four States were free, and in twelve negro slavery was permitted. The free States formed the northern portion of the country, and the slave States the southern. The boundary between them was Mason and Dixon's line (between Pennsylvania and Maryland), and the Ohio River. West of the Mississippi River Missouri allowed slavery; but it was forbidden west and north of that State.

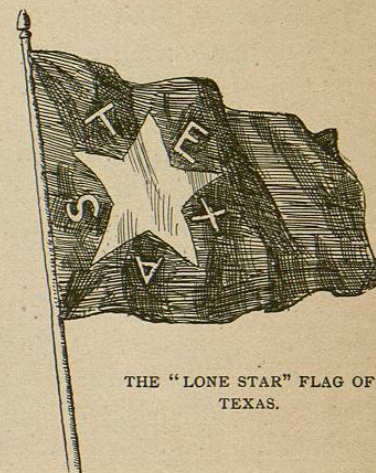
If we look at a map of the United States as it was then, we shall find that the free States had a large region north and west of them into which their people could move and form more States. On the other hand, the slave States had but little western territory between them and the Spanish country or Mexico.

The people in the South, if they moved west, must go

across the border into Texas, the nearest of the Mexican provinces. This they did in great numbers, until the population in Texas was more than half made up of people from the United States.

Among these settlers was Samuel Houston. He was nearly forty years of age when he moved into Texas, intending to find some means by which he could bring that province into the United States. He was a native of Virginia, but in early boyhood had gone to Tennessee.

Before he was of age he entered the army, and quickly rose, through the various grades, from the rank of a private to that of lieutenant. Leaving the army, young Houston studied law, entered politics, was sent to Congress, and was chosen governor of Tennessee.



THE "LONE STAR" FLAG OF TEXAS.

Houston had not been long in Texas before he began to make himself known. The new settlers turned to him at once as the man best fitted to lead them. He was elected general of the Texan army. He urged the calling of a convention, which, when it met, issued a declaration of independence.

Mexico was no more willing to lose Texas than England had been willing to permit the United States to be free and independent. Accordingly it began preparations to compel Texas to remain a Mexican province.

A strong Mexican army under Gen. Santa Anna in-



vaded Texas. The first important battle was an assault on the Alamo, a fort at San Antonio. Here a small body of Texan soldiers was attacked by a force of ten times their number. The siege lasted for nearly a month, until the Texans were all killed but six. Among the killed were David Crockett and General Bowie, who invented the "bowie-knife." The six who finally surrendered were killed by the Mexicans.

"Remember the Alamo!" became the war-cry of the Texans in their struggle for independence.

Finally, Houston fought a battle with Santa Anna and defeated him. In this engagement the Texan army numbered less than half the Mexican force, but within an hour the Mexicans were totally routed, losing six hundred and thirty killed and seven hundred and thirty prisoners, including Gen. Santa Anna himself.

The independence of Texas was now certain, though it was not acknowledged by Mexico. A government was established and Houston was elected President. The Republic of Texas ("The Lone Star Republic") at once sought admission into the Union. This was strongly opposed in the Congress of the United States. Finally, after waiting eight years, an act was passed annexing Texas (1845).

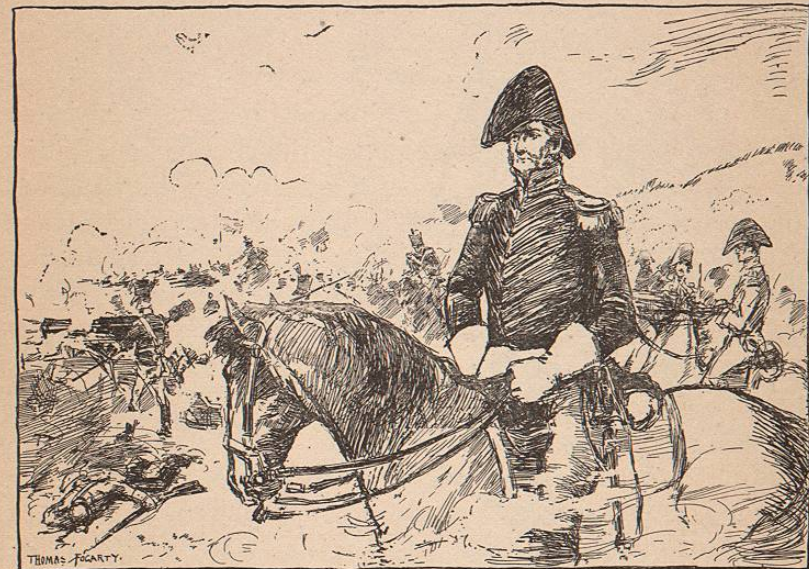
Thus Texas became the twenty-eighth member of the Union,—Arkansas, Michigan, and Florida having been previously admitted.

Now there were fifteen slave and thirteen free States, but Texas was the last to be admitted with a provision permitting slavery.

A dispute arose about the boundary between Texas and Mexico. A large force of the United States army, under Gen. Zachary Taylor, entered the disputed territory and was

soon met by a Mexican army, which had also crossed the boundary. A fight took place, and a war, called the War with Mexico, followed. General Taylor won several victories in northern Mexico, and a year later Gen. Winfield Scott captured the city of Mexico.

A treaty of peace between the two countries was made



GENERAL SCOTT BEFORE THE CITY OF MEXICO.

(1848), by which Mexico yielded the boundary which Texas claimed; and by this treaty also the United States purchased the region north of the present Mexico, between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. This territory was called California and New Mexico. Out of it three States and two Territories have since been made, besides parts of other States. By the addition of Texas and the Mexican Cession,



a region larger than the original United States was added to the country.

Now we had a new Western region from which States could be made, but no slave State was ever after this admitted to the Union. The first part of this new country to



THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN CALIFORNIA.

ask for admission was California, which framed a constitution prohibiting slavery. This was but two years after the Mexican treaty; then the province of California had a very small population.

California's remarkable growth was due to the discovery of something which almost everybody desires. Columbus sought for it when he made his first voyage; Cabot

thought of it when he sailed across the ocean; De Soto and thousands of other Spaniards made great exertions to find it; John Smith explored the interior of Virginia, seeking it. At last, when California had been bought by the United States, it was found in great quantities.

Captain Sutter, a Swiss immigrant, had obtained land in the Mexican province of California, and had built a fort

where the city of Sacramento now stands. He needed lumber for his new plantation, and therefore sent one of his men, named Marshall, to build a saw-mill a few miles up the American River. Marshall built a dam across the river, and a trench to carry the water to the mill. He noticed one day that there were shining specks lying quietly at the bottom of the trench. He began to think that they might be gold.

Saying nothing about what he had found, Marshall took the first opportunity to go down to Sutter's fort and have a talk with him. The two men began to examine the shining lumps. They found them to be heavy—so is gold. They were pounded into thin sheets—gold can be hammered. Acid would not eat them—it will eat almost everything but gold. The men decided that the lumps were gold and that they would say nothing about it.

But the great secret could not be kept. The news flew. Everybody seemed to become crazy for gold. Business was neglected; and all California rushed for the gold-fields.

Then the news crossed the mountains and the whole country was excited. From all the States, especially those of the North, men hastened to the "El Dorado." Some went by ship around South America; but this was too long a route for many. Others went by water to the Isthmus of Panama, and, crossing this, again took sail; but many died of sickness caused by the malaria of the Isthmus. Most tried the overland route across the plains and over the mountains in emigrant trains. This was a terrible trip; many perished and more turned back discouraged. This was in the year 1849, and these pioneers have been called "Forty-niners."

The gold was there, however, and vast sums were obtained, though at great expense of money and life. Silver was also found in large quantities.



But after all, though the precious metals are still mined in California, we can see to-day that neither gold nor silver makes the Pacific Coast so valuable as do her great agricultural products. Grain and fruit are worth more to human beings than all the gold and jewels in the world.

California was admitted as a free State, because the greater part of her people were opposed to slavery. The hopes of the slavery leaders were in vain. Ten years later the South voted to withdraw from the Union and have a country entirely composed of slave States. Among them was Texas. The governor of Texas at the time (1861) was Samuel Houston himself. This maker of a State, who had spent much of his life in the effort to bring Texas into the United States, could not bear to have his beloved land leave the Union.

He refused to secede; and was deprived of his office as governor. He never again entered public life, though he finally accepted the movement, being unwilling to oppose the people of his section. A year or two later he died, still disappointed because his State had left the Union.

When the Civil War ended, all the seceding States were readmitted, and no State is more loyal than Texas, the largest in the Union.

Give an account of the growth of the country.

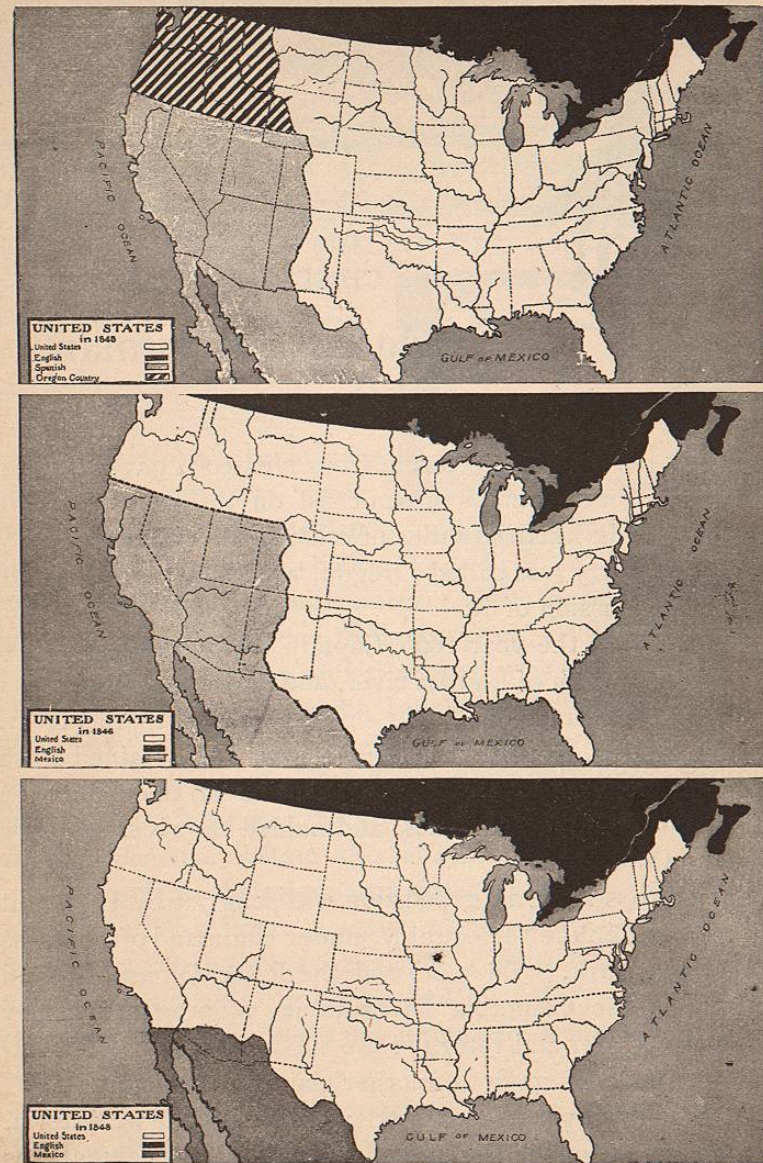
Tell the story of Houston, as a United States soldier; as a politician; as a Texan.

Describe the War for Texan Independence; the War with Mexico.

Give accounts of Marshall's discovery; of the "Forty-niners."

State what Houston thought of the secession of Texas.

Why did the slavery leaders desire more Southwestern territory? Why did the Texans cry, "Remember the Alamo"? Why was there opposition to the annexation of Texas? Was it made by the Northern or the Southern members of Congress, do you think? What was the cause of the War with Mexico? Why did California choose a free constitution? Why do people desire gold so much?



OUR COUNTRY'S GROWTH FROM 1845 TO 1848.